



COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0509

April 29, 2022

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee of Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair DeLauro and Ranking Member Granger:

I am requesting funding in the amount of \$1,500,000 for the Rail Academy of Central California - Rail/Transit Workforce Development Program in the fiscal year 2023 Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill.

The project sponsor for this project is the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (SJRRRC) and the project is located at 1020 E. Alpine Avenue, Stockton CA 95204.

Before the pandemic, the railroad industry struggled to attract new talent to address work shortages caused by the aging out of the current workforce and difficulties enticing young people to explore a career in rail. Passenger rail reliability is essential for those residing and working in the region, particularly in rural communities, who need improved access to critical services and economic centers.

For various reasons, including corporate transportation offices residing outside of California, youths and economically disadvantaged adults in San Joaquin County do not have straightforward access to apply for railroad jobs through traditional methods or may face barriers when applying for any position with the railroad. Bringing The Rail Academy of Central California (TRACC) to their Central California backyard will remove any obstacles. Through their partnership with the Career & Technical Department of the Stockton Unified School District (District), TRACC will reach every student wishing to pursue a career on the railroad. TRACC, led by the SJRRRC, will create employment opportunities that directly enhance the Central California region's economic growth.

SJRRRC's goal and that of their sectoral partners, the District and Sacramento City College (SAC City), is to provide the youth of Stockton, CA, and the adult learners of the surrounding region,

the marketable skills to position them for success in the rail industry. TRACC will operate as a strategic partnership between educational and business entities.

In the first year of operation, TRACC is forecasted to accept 20 Stockton High School students and 50 adult students. Between 2000-2011, Sac City operated a successful rail program. Over that 11-year period, Sac City enrolled over 8,000 students. As students (adult and youth) graduate from the program, the program will outgrow its current facility in Stockton. This funding will assist in the construction of a TRACC administration building that will house staff and the classrooms.

In the last decade, no economic crisis has shocked the nation and impacted every community as the COVID-19 pandemic has. The transportation industry has been significantly impacted by the pandemic, which further highlighted and exacerbated the existing workforce challenges we face; especially with an aging workforce nearing retirement.

Equity is at the heart of the TRACC program. Of the 33,943 students attending school in Stockton, 68% are Hispanic, 9.6% are African American and 9% are Asian. Pre-pandemic, Stockton, was already dealing with historical challenges related to a changing economy and historic disinvestment. In 2018, Stockton – whose roughly 310,000 residents were 42% Hispanic, 24% Asian, 19% non-Hispanic white and 13% African American – was the most racially diverse large city in America, according to a U.S. News analysis based on recent census data.

Funding for this project would be a good use of taxpayer funds, as it will create much-needed employment opportunities that will directly enhance economic growth in the region. Through their partnership with the District and their colleagues in the transportation sector, TRACC will be able to connect with the growing student population and provide training and a pathway to life-changing careers in the rail industry.

I certify that neither I nor my immediate family has any financial interest in this project.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jerry McNerney", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress